

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-12 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 7 are amended by the present amendment. Support for additions to the claims can be found in the claims as originally filed. Thus, no new matter is added.

Initially, Applicants and Applicants' representatives wish to thank Examiner Patel for the interview with Applicants' representatives on April 2, 2009. During the interview the present claims were discussed in detail. Comments and supplemental claim amendments discussed during the interview are reiterated below.

Accordingly, further to Applicants' amendment filed on March 9, 2009 and the above noted interview, the present supplemental amendment amends the claims to clarify independent Claims 1 and 7 and to clearly overcome the previously cited §112, second paragraph rejections. Moreover, as was discussed in the interview, Applicants note that the clarified claims clearly distinguish from the previously cited Nishi (U.S. Pat. No. 5,959,721) reference which never describes or suggests detecting a loss of the reflected light caused by the pellicle frame blocking out the level measuring light or the reflected light or the further recited suspending or fixing steps.

In addition, with regard to the Yoshii et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,652,657, herein "Yoshii")¹ reference discussed in the interview, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed invention also distinguishes over this reference.

Specifically, Yoshii discloses a particle inspection system in which the harmful influence of variations in the light transmissivity of a pellicle film (not a pellicle frame) can

¹ Not currently of record.

be eliminated. In other words, Yoshii discloses the idea of detecting the inspecting light passing through the pellicle film.

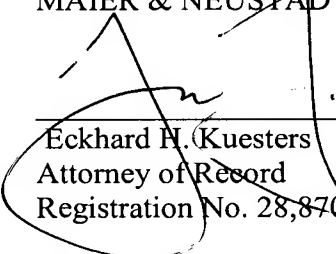
In contrast, the claimed invention recites a pellicle frame and relates to an idea of detecting the inspecting light being blocked by the pellicle frame, a feature not disclosed in Yoshii.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claims 1 and 7 and claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish over Nishi and Yoshii considered alone or together in any proper combination.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present supplemental amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Eckhard H. Kuesters
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 28,870

James Love
Registration No. 58,421

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/07)

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